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E.O. 12065: XDS-1 5/15/10 (CASTRO, RAUL H.) OR-M
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, AR
SUBJECT: (S) POSSIBLE INVITATIONS TO ARGENTINE MILITARY LEADERS

1. (S - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAS APPROVED IN PRINCIPLE THE CONCEPT OF A VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES OF A HIGH-RANKING ARGENTINE MILITARY OFFICER, WITH TENTATIVE TIMING OF A JUNE INVITATION FOR A SEPTEMBER VISIT. IN RESPONSE TO AN ARA REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON THIS PROPOSAL, I HAVE THE FOLLOWING TO OFFER.

3. TIMING. PROSPECT OF SUCH AN INVITATION HAS BEEN RAISED WITH GOA THREE TIMES THAT I AM AWARE OF. ONCE WITH FONMIN BY AMBASSADOR SMITH, WHEN THERE WAS NO REACTION THAT I COULD SEE. I HAVE RAISED IT WITH GENERAL GALTIERI AND WITH GENERAL VIOLA IN VERY INFORMAL TERMS. BOTH OF THEM RESPONDED WITHOUT MUCH ENTHUSIASM, AND BOTH SAID THE TIMING WAS NOT RIGHT. GALTIERI, ABOUT A MONTH AGO TOLD ME WE OUGHT TO PUT THE IDEA ON THE BACK BURNER, AND VIOLA SAID IT WOULD NOT BE TIMELY UNTIL AFTER SEPTEMBER, MEANING AFTER THE DECISION ON PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION.

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4. GOA PERCEPTIONS OF AN INVITATION. UNCERTAINTY ON PART OF THESE ARGENTINE LEADERS IS BECAUSE THEY DON'T SEE A VISIT AS AN UNMIXED BLESSING. WHILE VISIT CONFERS

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EXTERNAL RESPECTABILITY ON GOA AND ESPECIALLY ARMED FORCES, AND WILL BE HEAVILY PLAYED THAT WAY ABROAD, DOMESTICALLY THERE WILL ALSO BE HINTS THAT THE INVITEE IS SOMEHOW GOING TO WASHINGTON TO GET HIS ORDERS. THIS KIND OF THING HAPPENED WHEN VIDELA WENT TO WASHINGTON TO ATTEND THE SIGNING OF THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY, AND AGAIN THE OTHER DAY WHEN THE GOA WENT TO LENGTHS TO DISASSOCIATE MARTÍNEZ DE HOZ MEETINGS IN WASHINGTON FROM GOA ANNOUNCEMENT THEY WERE NOT GOING TO THE OLYMPICS. FURTHERMORE THEY ARE PROBABLY WONDERING IF RESPECTABILITY CONFERRED BY THE INVITATION EXTENDS TO RELIEF FROM NEGATIVE LOAN VOTES IN IFI'S AND HUMPHREY-KENNEDY AMENDMENT. THEY WOULD PROBABLY BE SKEPTICAL ABOUT VALUE OF AN INVITATION IF IT IS NOT ASSOCIATED WITH SOME SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE SHOWING RELATIONS ARE IMPROVING.

5. FROM MY PERSPECTIVE THE BENEFITS OF AN INVITATION ARE NOT GOING TO BE SIGNIFICANT UNTIL THE ARGENTINE LEADERS SHOW MORE ENTHUSIASM. I WILL BE GLAD TO DISCUSS THIS FURTHER DURING MY CONSULTATION NEXT WEEK.
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